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of Agriculture

National Agricultural  
Statistics Service

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# Washington Crop Weather

Released: April 28, 2008  
Week Ending: April 27, 2008  
CWP WA-CW1508

## Small Grain Development Slowed and Extent of Frost Damage Unknown in Orchards

### Field Crops

Days suitable for field work were 5.2. Throughout the grain growing counties, cooler temperatures continued to impact crop development. Farmers were hesitant to apply herbicides to slow growing grains for fear of damage due to the cold and wind drift. The overall development of grains had been slowed. Grain seeding progressed in the southern counties while the northern counties received late snow. In spite of the cool temperatures, several counties needed rain to help bring grain along. Alfalfa growth had been slowed by the cold. Corn planting continued in Grant County. Elsewhere in the state, potatoes, peas and sweet corn were being planted. Commercial Christmas tree growers reported bud break on Norway spruce

### Fruits and Vegetables

In the Yakima Valley, atypical weather continued with temperatures much colder than normal. In the lower to mid-Valley, most cherries were beyond full bloom, but not at shuck fall. Apple bloom had been prolonged by cool weather with some apple varieties and locations in full bloom. Most pears had entered bloom stage. Grape growth had been delayed by 2-3 weeks, but some vines were nearly at budburst. More subfreezing temperatures necessitated frost protection in orchards. There were reports of extensive bud damage in some areas while other areas reported little to no frost damage.

### Livestock

Range and pasture conditions were 1% very poor, 3% poor, 55% fair and 41% good. On the eastern side of the Cascades, rangeland development was behind normal due to the cold. Livestock producers were caught between not enough stored feed and very slow pasture growth. Hay prices were high. Stevens County reported some cattle were being moved to spring pasture. Shellfish growers continued late season oyster and clam harvesting along with seeding operations.

#### Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	5.2
Last Week	4.6

#### Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	0	11	61	28
Topsoil 5 Yr Avg	1	12	78	9
Subsoil	5	17	73	5
Subsoil 5 Yr Avg	6	21	70	3
Irrigation Water	0	0	87	13
Irrigation Water 5 Yr Avg	3	7	89	2
Hay & Roughage	27	19	54	0

VS=Very Short SH=Short AD=Adequate S=Surplus

#### Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2007	5 Yr. Avg.
Spring Wheat Planted	59	57	78	85
Spring Wheat Emerged	34	30	39	55
Winter Wheat Headed	0	0	0	2
Barley Planted	43	33	83	78
Barley Emerged	17	13	34	45
Field Corn Planted	20	17	27	36
Field Corn Emerged	3	1	15	8
Potatoes Planted	50	45	58	70
Potatoes Emerged	10	5	20	23
Dry Edible Beans Planted	16	15	49	41
Proc. Green Peas Planted	40	37	41	69
Dry Peas Planted	21	18	59	57
Alfalfa Hay 1st Cutting	0	0	0	1

#### Crop Condition\*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	2	5	32	51	10
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	2	10	78	10
Spring Wheat Dryland	0	5	54	40	1
Spring Wheat Irrigated	0	5	24	62	9
Barley Dryland	0	3	59	38	0
Barley Irrigated	0	8	13	58	21
Potatoes	0	0	26	74	0

VP=Very Poor P=Poor F=Fair G=Good EX=Excellent

\* Crop conditions are a measurement of the growing conditions and are not indicative of the quality of the crop produced.

# COUNTY COMMENTS

## Western

**Grays Harbor:** Cannery pea and sweet corn growers took advantage of several days of nice weather to continue field cultivation. Ag producers continued to complain about the unseasonably cold, wet spring which has delayed planting and perennial crop development. Commercial Christmas tree growers reported bud break on Norway spruce. Bedding plant growers complained about slow sales, as home gardeners delayed planting due to freezing nighttime temperatures. Greenhouse tomato growers reported early varieties in full bloom.

**Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific:** All three counties were beginning to have warmer temperatures and some were getting their farm work started. The wetter areas will still have to sit for awhile. Peas were supposed to be planted early in the week, but they will have to be postponed due to the wet ground. Overall, winter has been colder and wetter than normal.

**Mason:** Rain of about 0.9 of an inch was received during the week. Frost was received all during the week. Local ranchers were looking for hay. Nursery sales were slowly starting.

**Pacific:** Colder than average temperatures caught growers by surprise and slowed crop development. Despite freezing temperatures, frost damage was minimal. Weed control activities continued for small fruit, Christmas tree, and cranberry producers. Improvements in pasture conditions were seen with longer days and drier conditions. Shellfish growers continued late season oyster and clam harvesting, along with seeding operations.

**Pierce:** Crop conditions remained fair. It was cooler than usual which set crops back a little. There were no unusual situations to report and no reports on crop damage due to a weather event.

**Skagit:** The high temperature for the week was 49 degrees with 0.1 of an inch of precipitation received. The weather was good during the week, so farmers were able to get some

crops in the ground. Tulip fields were coming alive with the colors of spring. Wheat farmers planted the most wheat this year than has ever been seen in the county. The first fields of spinach seed and potatoes were planted this week. The 2008 cabbage seed crop was in the process of getting staked so it will not fall over when it bolts and when there were heavy winds.

**Skagit/San Juan/Island:** The weather continued to be cooler and wetter than normal with some frosty mornings earlier in the week. Cold, wet fields delayed planting, but the weekend brought one warm sunny day; so farmers were busy in their fields taking advantage of the temporary relief. Although crops were running two weeks behind schedule, there were no additional crop failures reported.

**Thurston:** Unseasonably cold weather with persistent rain showers continued to delay field cultivation and planting. Commercial blueberry growers reported plant development was about three weeks behind schedule. Early flowering varieties like Weymouth were just beginning to bloom. Turfgrass growers took advantage of several days with no rain to mow and fertilize their fields. Orders for commercial turfgrass increased since spring has arrived. The cool, wet weather was ideal for installing sod. Livestock growers made haylage for the first time this year. Christmas tree growers continued to apply herbicides and finished with fertilizer applications. Retail garden stores and nurseries continued to report slow sales due to the unseasonably cold, wet weather. Home gardeners complained that early blooming fruit trees and spring flowering shrubs like lilacs were showing frost damage to flower buds.

**Whatcom:** Pastures benefitted from the warmer temperatures, and more fields were being prepared for planting. Frost received on Saturday morning was a concern to berry producers.

## Central

**Benton:** Fruit crops were hit hard from freezing temperatures during the past month. There were areas of the county affected for the first time in many years. The damage has not yet been assessed.

**Franklin:** Temperatures were cooler than normal. There were reports of probable orchard fruit damage to soft fruits, some apples, and some cherries. The extent of the damage was still unknown. Producers reported the first cutting of alfalfa hay and most other crops were 2-3 weeks behind schedule.

**Grant:** Freezing temperatures have damaged the 2008 fruit crop. Reports have been received of 100 percent losses on stone fruit and 25-50 percent damage on apples and pears. Grain corn planting continued.

**Kittitas:** Rangeland and productivity were still well behind schedule, but late spring moisture should prolong growth farther into the summer than usual. Crop growth picked up, and farmers were busy with weed control and fertilization applications during the week.

**Kittitas (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Spring work was in full swing. Water was running into the ditches.

**Klickitat:** April continued to be very cold and windy with 40 degree temperatures and overnight frost throughout much of the county. Daytime temperatures warmed up to 60 degrees by the weekend. Alfalfa growth was only 3-4" tall, nipped by frost and way behind the annual average. Some growers were expecting lower alfalfa hay yield as a result. Early pasture growth has already dried up. Tilled fields saw the effects of wind erosion during the week. Rain and a few snow flurries settled wind blown dust, but that moisture has already dissipated. Tilling and seeding continued. Fertilizing was underway, but application amounts were way down as cost was a big concern. Mid-week rain helped late seeding as well

as over-seeded pastures, but the rain grounded pollinators in orchard areas. Apple growers using Integrated Pest Management programs placed pheromone traps for mating disruption as codling moth emergence dates near. In vineyards, grapes were not yet budding, and delayed dormant oil sprays were applied. Vine pruning was complete and tying continued. High fuel costs were affecting all growers who have to make every move count more than ever. Spring calving was nearly over and calves looked good.

**Klickitat (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** The county has been colder than normal, and the pasture grass was heading out. The south side of the Columbia hills were turning brown. Ranchers were worried about not having enough grass for the spring and summer. Moisture levels were low, but crops were beginning to grow. There has been warmer weather the past couple of days, but frost was received on Saturday morning.

**Yakima:** Spring weather continued to be atypical and much colder than normal. Most cherries were beyond full bloom, but not yet at shuck fall in the lower to mid-Valley. Apple bloom has been prolonged by cool weather with some apple varieties and locations in full bloom. Most pears were entering the bloom stage. Grape growth was delayed by about 2-3 weeks, but some vines were nearly at budburst. More sub-freezing temperatures necessitated frost protection in orchards. There were reports scattered around the county with extensive bud damage that will likely result in light crop loads. Other areas reported little to no frost damage.

**Yakima (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Average temperatures varied from 16 degrees below normal to three degrees above normal, with 0.9 inches of precipitation. Low temperatures caused growers to continue the use of frost control measures. Growers were assessing the extent of crop damage due to recent freezing temperatures.

## Eastern

**Adams:** There has been unusually cold weather with temperatures into the low 20s each night, which undoubtedly caused damage to blooming fruit crops. Dryland wheat farmers said the subsoil moisture was not as great as expected with the winter snowpack. Temperatures over the weekend finally warmed to normal or above and helped move seeded crops to emerge.

**Asotin:** Cool weather continued as spring seeding progressed in the higher elevations. Rainfall will soon be needed in the lower elevations.

**Asotin/Garfield:** Dry conditions allowed most farmers to complete spring planting, except for the higher elevations where snow drifts have delayed planting. The northern half of Asotin County was in need of rain for proper development of crops and rangeland. Rain was seeded in the lower areas of both counties. Cold temperatures for the past six weeks have left both crops and rangeland development behind normal.

**Ferry:** Cold temperatures delayed grass growth. Hay supplies were running out throughout the county.

**Pend Oreille/Spokane:** Temperatures varied throughout the week. Reardan and Edwall had five inches of snow early in the week and temperatures in the high teens and lower 20s. It's still too early to know what crop damages have occurred. Some tractor work began in the southern part of Spokane County. The cold weather delayed pasture growth, so most livestock were still being fed hay.

**Stevens:** Cold, wet, snowy weather hampered any type of fieldwork. Nothing was growing. Crops were approximately three weeks late this year.

**Stevens (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Cold temperatures continued to inhibit crop development. Pasture grasses were dormant due to the lack of warmth. Tillage operations continued on hay. Seeding was delayed on grain farms until soil temperatures improve. Cows continued to move toward spring pastures.

**Walla Walla:** Rain was received one day during the week. More rain is needed or grain will begin showing effects. Spring grazing was behind normal, and pastures were short of moisture. Pea seeding was winding down. The first cutting of hay will be late.

**Walla Walla (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** The weather was favorable throughout the week with the exception of winds making field spraying a challenge. Crops looked good throughout the area, but a good rain would be very well received at this time.

**Whitman:** Cooler temperatures continued to impact crop conditions. Fieldwork continued mainly uninterrupted throughout the week, with little rainfall. However, the cooler temperatures caused hesitation with herbicide applications on winter wheat and slowed emergence in growth of fall crops. Concerns mounted over slow growth on range and hay acres in an environment of already short feed.

**Weather Statistics**  
**Week of April 20 - 27, 2008**

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				GROWING DEGREE DAYS				LAST WEEK PRECIP			SEASON CUM PRECIP			
	-----				-----				-----			-----			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	BASE-50F TOT DFN	BASE-60F TOT DFN	TOTAL INCHES	DFN DAYS	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	DAYS	TOTAL INCHES	DFN	PCT NORMAL	DAYS
WEST															
Bellingham Intl	29	63	46	-4	2 -8	0 +0	0.15	-0.48	2	21.01	-8.22	72	140		
Everett	34	64	48	-3	9 -5	0 +0	0.21	-0.37	5	27.52	-1.69	94	150		
Hoquiam	35	71	48	-3	5 -9	0 +0	1.06	+0.16	5	49.72	-9.89	83	161		
Kelso	32	72	48	-3	6 -11	0 +0	0.15	-0.56	4	28.59	-10.68	73	116		
Olympia	27	65	45	-4	1 -7	0 +0	0.36	-0.30	4	39.90	-4.69	89	142		
Seattle-Tacoma	36	67	49	-3	7 -8	0 +0	0.22	-0.26	2	29.82	-2.15	93	136		
Shelton	28	66	44	-7	0 -21	0 +0	0.58	-0.20	5	52.34	-6.02	90	142		
Tacoma WA AP	28	66	45	-6	2 -15	0 +0	0.21	-0.36	3	28.20	-5.97	83	127		
Vancouver WA	35	70	49	-2	9 -9	0 +0	0.90	+0.33	4	32.31	-2.80	92	130		
CENTRAL															
Ellensburg	22	73	45	-5	6 -8	0 +0	0.23	+0.10	2	5.41	-1.77	75	56		
Omak AP	22	69	43	-7	5 -8	0 +0	0.12	-0.16	2	5.49	-4.85	53	49		
Stampede Pass	22	58	35	-2	0 +0	0 +0	1.48	+0.47	5	61.16	-9.76	86	153		
Wenatchee	25	68	45	-9	7 -25	0 -4	0.15	+0.01	2	3.95	-2.55	61	40		
Yakima AP	19	71	44	-8	4 -20	0 +0	0.09	+0.02	1	5.32	-1.08	83	47		
NORTHEAST															
Colville	24	70	43	-6	2 -12	0 +0	0.32	-0.03	4	12.74	-2.92	81	93		
Deer Park	20	65	40	-9	0 -13	0 +0	0.24	-0.11	3	16.96	+2.98	121	111		
Republic	23	67	43	-4	3 -4	0 +0	0.07	-0.21	1	8.86	-1.59	85	80		
Spokane AP	27	67	43	-6	3 -9	0 +0	0.33	+0.05	3	13.89	+1.54	112	98		
EAST CENTRAL															
Ephrata	27	70	46	-8	7 -27	0 -5	0.05	-0.03	2	3.86	-1.76	69	59		
Moses Lake	24	70	46	-9	5 -29	0 -5	0.06	-0.02	1	3.92	-1.70	70	56		
Quincy	23	66	45	-8	4 -26	0 -4	0.11	+0.02	1	5.77	-0.36	94	58		
Ritzville	21	62	40	-10	0 -14	0 +0	0.09	-0.12	2	8.12	-0.74	92	75		
SOUTHEAST															
Hanford	24	70	49	-9	8 -44	0 -8	0.00	-0.07	0	3.06	-2.21	58	38		
Pasco	26	73	50	-7	9 -37	0 -7	0.04	-0.08	1	5.40	-0.54	91	56		
Pullman	25	70	44	-4	6 -2	0 +0	0.01	-0.34	1	13.82	-2.54	84	93		
Walla Walla Rgn	31	73	49	-6	9 -27	0 -7	0.22	-0.13	2	10.77	-4.66	70	85		
Whitman Mission	25	70	47	-7	1 -28	0 +0	0.14	-0.11	3	9.36	-1.25	88	88		
WESTERN IDAHO PANHANDLE															
Lewiston ID	31	66	47	-7	8 -24	0 -3	0.03	-0.25	2	5.34	-3.00	64	73		

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Friday September 1, 2007

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

NA = Data Unavailable

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches. Precipitation

Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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National weather summary: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/waobr/weather/2007/summary/weth1606.pdf>

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